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California State Sheriffs' Association

Organization Founded by the Sheriffs in 1894

FROM WORDS TO DEEDS

An Overview of Activities

December 18, 2006

DESCRIPTION

From Words to Deeds is the result of a collaboration of leaders in criminal justice and mental health from throughout California who joined together to identify and advance strategies to effectively divert individuals with mental illness from jail.

MISSION

The leaders in criminal justice and mental health participating in this effort strive to end the criminalization of individuals with mental illness by supporting proven strategies that promote early intervention, access to effective treatments, a planned re-entry and the preservation of public safety.

VISION

A true shift in the paradigm between criminal justice and mental health will embody an effective jail diversion system that fosters an ongoing and successful exchange of information among courts, criminal justice agencies, mental health professionals, government and non-government organizations to achieve a substantial positive change in the way individuals with mental illness are treated in our communities.

PARTICIPANTS

Words to Deeds Leadership Group:

First	Last	Organization	Email	Phone
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ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

1. 2003: The Changing the Paradigm/Words to Deeds efforts began in 2003 with a workshop designed to convene stakeholders in county law enforcement to identify creative solutions to joint problems of county mental health, human services and law enforcement agencies. Participants discussed opportunities to leverage existing resources and efforts to identify non-traditional funding sources. Sponsored by the California State Association of Counties (CSAC) and the National Association of Counties (NaCO) with a grant from Eli Lilly and Company, "Maximizing Resources with Minimal Funds: A Mental Health Summit for Law Enforcement," launched a movement for change.

Highlights of the program included:

- Best practices from around the state and nation were highlighted, including the implementation of behavioral courts, development of alliances for change (Partners in Crisis, Florida) and the utilization of unique funding sources (The Maryland Model).
- Presentations also included examples of unsuccessful endeavors to encourage organizations to network and learn from each other's mistakes.
- A roundtable discussion with all speakers enabled the group to interact and share experiences, providing a forum fostering collaboration.

- The event host committee included a diverse group of organizations including the California Board of Corrections, California Institute for Mental Health, California Psychiatric Association, Council on Mentally Ill Offenders, USC Keck School of Medicine Institute of Psychiatry, Law and Behavioral Science, and the National Sheriffs' Association.
- NaCO's involvement in the program helped to raise issues around corrections and mental health to a priority status at the national level.

2. 2005: Building on the success of the 2004 workshop, the Orange County Sheriff's Department (Sheriff Michael Carona) partnered with Eli Lilly and Company to conduct the next in what would become a series of stakeholder meetings in the summer of 2005. The workshop, "Criminal Justice and Mental Health: Changing the Paradigm – An Interactive Workshop," was aimed at developing viable strategies for diversion of individuals with mental illness from the criminal justice system. The program was a great success with nearly 50 key stakeholders representing county and statewide law enforcement and mental health agencies as well as advocates, providers, elected officials, veterans and minority communities. This second workshop featured an interactive breakout period designed to produce collaborative strategies and action steps for use around the state.

Highlights of the program included:

- A panel discussion on California's Mentally Ill Offender Crime Reduction (MIOCR) grant process. The discussion provided program participants "real life" examples of what "worked and didn't work." Attendees actively participated by sharing their experiences of "best practices."
- Orange County Sheriff Michael Carona delivered a luncheon address illustrating his leadership and commitment to reducing criminalization of the mentally ill. He encouraged attendees to think outside of the box and develop collaborative strategies to maximize available funds through the Mental Health Services Act.
- Washington State Partners in Crisis Co-Chair Peter Luekevich presented a dynamic overview of the efforts underway in Washington. The progressive nature of the program, as well as the compelling results, prompted many attendees to discuss ways to create a similar partnership in California.
- Afternoon breakout sessions resulted in the development of tangible next steps. Each group provided the opportunity for interaction among attendees as well as thoughtful analysis of some of the most pressing issues facing the criminal justice system.
- The "From Words to Deeds," booklet resulted from this program, providing a chronicle of the issues facing corrections and mental health as well as an outline of the specific strategies and action steps developed by the group.

3. 2006: The impetus created by the 2005 workshop provided a springboard for the 2006 meeting, "From Words to Deeds: Changing the Paradigm for Criminal Justice and Mental Health," sponsored by the California State Sheriffs' Association Education Foundation with a grant from Eli Lilly and Company.

The California State Sheriffs' Association Foundation held the interactive workshop in the summer of 2006 with a goal of developing concrete strategies to divert individuals with mental illness from jail to reduce the burden on the corrections system and improve lives.

"From Words to Deeds" advanced the objectives identified during the previous two workshops by convening key leaders in criminal justice and mental health from around the state to not only share best practices, but to also develop viable opportunities and develop strategies that could be tailored and implemented in various counties. The workshop successfully maintained the "from words" to "deeds" momentum and motivated participants to improve the system of care through effective collaboration.

Highlights of the program included:

- A panel discussion focused on how to utilize existing funding and maximize impact through creative collaborations. Speakers (listed below) represented various perspectives.
 - Kathleen Connolly – San Francisco Citywide Case Management Forensics Team
 - Carol Hood – Deputy Director, Mental Health Services Act
 - David Janssen – Los Angeles County Chief Administrative Officer
 - Mark Refowitz – Orange County Mental Health Director
 - Supervisor Helen Thomson – Yolo County Board of Supervisors, 2nd District
- The Words to Deeds Leadership Group emerged with additional strength and impact, developing into a more dedicated corps of individuals.
- Participation in the 2006 workshop increased by 35% over participation in 2005, with approximately 80 attendees representing sheriffs, courts (judges, probation, public defenders, parole officers), academia, service providers, mental health directors, state and local governments, the Governor's Administration and the pharmaceutical industry. Representatives from 29 counties attended, including:

Alameda, Amador, Butte, Calaveras, Colusa, Contra Costa, Los Angeles, Madera, Marin, Mendocino, Monterey, Napa, Orange, Placer, Riverside, Sacramento, San Benito, San Bernardino, San Diego, San Francisco, San Mateo, Shasta, Solano, Stanislaus, Sutter, Tehama, Tulare, Ventura, Yolo
- Not only did the quantity of participants increase but so did the quality of their participation. All participants were actively engaged in the breakout sessions, providing meaningful contributions to the discussion. Additionally, more high-ranking officials attended the 2006 workshop than in past years.

SUMMARY

As the most frequent providers of mental health services, the sheriffs have taken a leadership role in the effort to divert individuals with mental illness from jail. The energy and subsequent action among sheriffs has evolved into an unprecedented movement to work not only within existing systems but also to develop and implement innovative "best practices" for those systems. Through the *Changing the Paradigm* series of workshops, additional leaders in corrections and mental health have emerged, adding considerable strength to the effort.

The Words to Deeds Leadership Group meets regularly to discuss challenges and identify opportunities. The group has outlined priorities and goals and is currently working to produce a follow up document from the 2006 workshop. Additionally, CSSA is pursuing funding to host a 2007 workshop focusing on the need for mental health and corrections to collaborate on impacting Mental Health Services Act funding to address local needs that will reduce the burden of mentally ill offenders on the corrections system.